



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Committee on the Rights of the Child

Combined seventh and eighth periodic reports submitted by Belarus under article 44 of the Convention, due in 2025^{*}, ^{}**

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

** The annex to the present document may be accessed from the web page of the Committee.



Introduction

1. In accordance with article 44 of the Convention, Belarus hereby submits its combined seventh and eighth periodic report on the implementation of the Convention.
2. This report has been prepared in accordance with the treaty-specific guidelines regarding the form and content of periodic reports to be submitted by States parties under article 44 (1) (b) of the Convention and taking into account the Committee's concluding observations on Belarus, including those made following consideration of its combined fifth and sixth periodic reports in February 2020.
3. The report was prepared by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the Supreme Court, the Office of the Procurator General, the Investigative Committee, the National Centre for Legislation and Legal Research and the National Statistical Committee.
4. The report contains information on legislative, administrative and other measures taken in Belarus to give effect to the Convention. It reflects changes that have occurred during the reporting period, progress in promoting and protecting the rights and legal interests of children and the challenges that remain.
5. The report was discussed at a meeting of the National Commission on the Rights of the Child on 19 November 2025 and at a meeting of the Council for Sustainable Development on 8 December 2025.
6. Detailed information on how Belarus is upholding specific categories of human rights is given in periodic reports submitted to other human rights treaty bodies and universal periodic review documents:
 - In view of the word limits for reports established in General Assembly resolution 68/268, additional statistical data are annexed separately.

I. General measures of implementation (arts. 4, 42 and 44 (6))

Legislation

7. The Constitution of the Republic of Belarus, as amended by the national referendum of 27 February 2022, provides that:
 - Marriage – understood as the union of a woman and a man – and family, motherhood, fatherhood and childhood are under the protection of the State.
 - Parents and persons acting in loco parentis have the right and the duty to raise their children, attend to their health, development and education, prepare them for socially useful work, foster cultural awareness and instil respect for the laws and the historical and national traditions of Belarus.
 - Children must not be subjected to cruel or degrading treatment or be engaged in work that may be harmful to their physical, mental or moral development.
 - The State provides support to families with children, orphans and children deprived of parental care.
 - The State ensures that priority is given to raising children within a family environment.
8. Between 2020 and 2025, laws were passed aimed at safeguarding children's rights:
 - Act No. 183-Z of 30 June 2022 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Their Social Integration, which establishes the rights of persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities; defines guarantees for the realization of those persons' rights, equality and non-discrimination on the basis of disability; and is aimed at

improving their quality of life, at creating and ensuring appropriate conditions for the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in the life of society and at preventing disability

- Act No. 94-Z of 11 December 2020, amending Act No. 2435-KP of 18 June 1993, the Healthcare Act, with provisions aimed at improving access to healthcare for children, including by providing for medical care to be delivered at a child's place of residence
- Act No. 154-Z of 14 January 2022 and Act No. 46-Z of 5 December 2024, which introduced comprehensive amendments to the Education Code, established the principle of inclusive education to ensure equal access to education for all learners, taking into account their special educational needs and individual abilities; made general secondary education compulsory; required that persons held in correctional institutions be provided with opportunities to receive not only general and vocational education but also specialized secondary education; and provided for free transport for learners to and from educational institutions and venues for excursions, physical education, recreational, cultural and other activities
- Act No. 25-Z of 8 July 2024, amending Act No. 7-Z of 29 December 2012, the State Benefits for Families Raising Children Act, with a view to improving the level of social protection for families raising children with disabilities
- Act No. 26-Z of 8 July 2024, introducing comprehensive amendments to the Marriage and Family Code to provide for State protection of children in disadvantaged families and protect the property and other interests of children
- Act No. 86-Z of 12 July 2025, amending the Rights of the Child Act (No. 2570-KP of 19 November 1993), by strengthening measures to protect children from sexual violence and prevent reoffending; enhancing mechanisms to protect children from information harmful to their health and development; reaffirming the priority of raising children in a family environment and the obligation of parents to create the conditions necessary for children to complete compulsory general secondary education and to prepare them for independent life in the family and society; and providing for State support to families raising children with disabilities and children with special developmental needs

9. Act No. 86-Z also amended Act No. 73-Z of 21 December 2005 on Guarantees of Social Protection for Orphans, Children Deprived of Parental Care and Young Persons Who Were Orphaned or Deprived of Parental Care as Children, setting out the procedures governing the provision by the State of medicines and medical devices to orphans, children deprived of parental care and young persons who were orphaned or deprived of parental care as children.

Coordination

10. The National Commission on the Rights of the Child is responsible for monitoring compliance with the rights and legitimate interests of children, as set out in the Convention and the Rights of the Child Act; promoting the social well-being of children within the family and increasing parental responsibility for their upbringing; monitoring and analysing the situation of children in Belarus; initiating legislative measures relating to the implementation of children's rights and the protection of their legitimate interests; developing proposals for improving social policy and support mechanisms for children and families; and setting in place the necessary conditions for the implementation and protection of children's rights and legitimate interests. The Commission meets at least twice a year. The division of responsibilities between the National Commission on the Rights of the Child and the Commission on Juvenile Affairs under the Council of Ministers has been maintained. Practical arrangements have been put in place for the regional representative offices of the National Commission on the Rights of the Child: public reception centres staffed by members of the Commission operate in every region; members conduct off-site outreach sessions for children and their legal representatives; each meeting of the National Commission reviews regional developments relating to current issues concerning the protection of the rights and

legitimate interests of children; and representatives of the executive committees of each oblast and the city of Minsk serve on the Commission as its authorized representatives.

National plan of action

11. The National Plan of Action to Improve the Situation of Children and Protect their Rights for the period 2022–2026 was approved by Council of Ministers Decision No. 490 of 25 July 2022. Funding for the measures set out in the National Plan is provided from the national budget, the relevant local budgets and other sources not prohibited by law.

Independent monitoring

12. The National Commission on the Rights of the Child monitors compliance with the rights and legitimate interests of children, as set out in the Convention, the Rights of the Child Act and other international and national legal acts. The Commission fully ensures the protection of children's rights by carrying out the functions of the Commissioner for Children's Rights.

Resource allocation

13. The budget of Belarus is formulated on the basis of well-founded macroeconomic forecasts for the country's socioeconomic development. The primary objective of budgetary policy is to ensure the balance and sustainability of the national and local budgets, while maintaining social guarantees and the social focus of government expenditure.

14. In the period 2020–2025, expenditure from the consolidated budget on social sectors (social policy, education, healthcare, physical education and sports, culture and the media) amounted to the following:

- 2020: 18.0 billion Belarusian roubles (Rbl)
- 2021: Rbl 21.4 billion, or 118.9% higher than in 2020
- 2022: Rbl 22.9 billion, or 107.0% higher than in 2021
- 2023: Rbl 26.9 billion, or 117.5% higher than in 2022
- 2024: Rbl 31.2 billion, or 116.0% higher than in 2023
- 2025: Rbl 36.5 billion (revised estimate as at 1 November 2025), or 117.0% higher than in 2024

15. Child-responsive budgeting is achieved not through a direct increase in the share of budgetary resources allocated to support children relative to overall public expenditure, but through measures to ensure that budgetary expenditure and the underlying public programmes are aligned with the interests and needs of the population group concerned.

16. In addition, expenditure falling within the "children's budget" is funded from appropriations allocated in the national and local budgets, the budget of the State extrabudgetary social protection fund and from extrabudgetary and other sources not prohibited by law.

17. The Government continues to pursue a policy of increasing household incomes and providing social guarantees for the most vulnerable members of society, including children. The proportion of the population living in low-income households remains relatively low, at 3.4% in the second quarter of 2025, (0.7 percentage points lower than in 2021) and reflecting the country's sustained socioeconomic development. Accordingly, no additional comprehensive measures to reduce poverty are considered necessary.

Data collection

18. The National Statistical Committee, with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) office in Belarus, has developed an indicator framework to monitor the situation of children in key social areas: demography, healthcare, social protection, education, culture, sport and recreation, child protection, justice for children and child well-being. The "Statistics on Children" module of the interactive information and analytical system for the dissemination of official statistics provides broad access to data and metadata relating to this set of indicators, disaggregated by sex, age and urban/rural area. The national platform for reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals makes it possible to monitor progress towards child-related targets under the Goals.

Dissemination, training and awareness-raising

19. The legal website for children, mir.pravo.by, continues to operate. Its resources are widely used in schools to promote legal literacy among children and adolescents, including awareness of their fundamental rights and responsibilities. In 2025, the Adukatsiya i Vykhavanne publishing house published a guide for children and parents entitled *Children on Their Rights and Responsibilities*, which provides child-friendly and comprehensive information on the Convention and the mechanisms for its implementation.

Cooperation with civil society

20. Citizens may establish voluntary associations and other non-profit organizations on the basis of shared interests in order to meet non-material needs and achieve the purposes set out in their statutes. The following voluntary associations operate in the interests of children: the Belarusian National Youth Union, the Belarusian National Pioneer Organization, the Belarusian Children's Fund and SOS Children's Villages.

Children's rights and the business sector

21. The legislation of Belarus contains comprehensive provisions to ensure that the business sector complies with international human rights and children's rights standards. Compliance with legal requirements is monitored by the National Commission on the Rights of the Child and its regional representatives.

II. General principles (arts. 2, 3, 6 and 12)

Non-discrimination

22. In Belarus, all children enjoy equal access to free general secondary education, healthcare and social benefits, including children living in rural areas, orphans and children deprived of parental care, Roma children, migrant and stateless children, children with disabilities and children in institutional care. The law fully ensures the protection of children from discrimination.

Best interests of the child

23. The principle of ensuring the best interests of the child when government bodies and other organizations make decisions regarding children is set out in the following pieces of legislation:

- Marriage and Family Code
- Citizenship Act (No. 136–3 of 1 August 2002)

- Act No. 200-Z of 31 May 2003 on the Principles of the System for the Prevention of Child Neglect and Juvenile Delinquency

Respect for the views of the child

24. In collaboration with the UNICEF office in Belarus, the Child- and Adolescent-friendly City initiative is being implemented in 36 cities and towns. Local coordinating councils have been established to analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of social policies affecting children, adolescents and their families, develop policy and programme approaches, organize and carry out activities and raise public awareness of the Child- and Adolescent-Friendly City initiative through the media, workplaces and local communities.

25. In the cities participating in the initiative, children's and youth parliaments (councils) have been established under local authorities as a forum for children and young people to participate in decision-making processes aimed at improving the situation of children in their communities.

26. Belarus is an active member of the Commission of Commissioners for Children's Rights of the Commonwealth of Independent States, which includes a Children's Council.

III. Civil rights and freedoms (arts. 7, 8 and 13–17)

Nationality

27. According to article 10 of the Constitution, no one may be deprived of their Belarusian citizenship or of the right to change citizenship. Article 11 of the Constitution provides that foreign nationals and stateless persons enjoy the same rights and freedoms and fulfil the same obligations as citizens of Belarus, unless otherwise provided in the Constitution, laws and international agreements entered into by Belarus.

28. Over the past five years, the Citizenship Act has been amended to incorporate the principle of the best interests of the child in citizenship-related decisions concerning children and to expand the categories of persons eligible to acquire Belarusian citizenship under the simplified (registration) procedure.

29. Belarus has prepared a report for the fourth cycle of the universal periodic review on the progress made by Belarus towards accession to the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness of 30 August 1961.

Roma children

30. Roma children enjoy all the same rights as members of other ethnic groups. The voluntary association Romsкая Diaspora is registered in Belarus. This organization actively maintains international contacts and is a member of international federations of Roma associations. The main focus of Roma voluntary organizations is the integration of Roma into contemporary society.

31. In general secondary education institutions in Belarus, Roma children receive education on the same basis as other children and enjoy equal rights, including the right to free, compulsory general secondary education. The Government is taking consistent measures to prevent Roma children from missing school. According to the data from the 2019 population census, among Roma aged 10 and above, more than 10% (565 persons) had higher or postgraduate education and 23% had specialized secondary or vocational education. According to the 2009 census, 28 out of 7,079 Roma in the country, or 0.4%, had higher education.

32. Roma children are subject to article 18 of the Marriage and the Family Code, which establishes the minimum age for marriage at 18 years. The minimum age for marriage may be lowered by no more than three years in exceptional cases, such as pregnancy, the existence of a child in common or if a minor has acquired full legal capacity.

Right to privacy

33. To safeguard the right to privacy, the law provides for general criminal liability for violations of the privacy of correspondence, telephone conversations and telegraphic or other communications and for unlawful acts relating to information on private life and personal data (Criminal Code, arts. 203 and 203¹). Particular attention has been devoted to combating bullying and the development of suicidal behaviours among children, and criminal liability has been established for driving a person to suicide, incitement to suicide and the promotion of suicide (Criminal Code, arts. 145, 146 and 342¹).

Corporal punishment

34. In 2022, regulatory provisions relating to the prevention of domestic violence were fully incorporated into the Principles of Action to Prevent Offences Act. The term “domestic violence” refers to deliberate unlawful or immoral acts of a physical, psychological or sexual nature. The Act contains provisions requiring the relevant government bodies to pay particular attention to cases of domestic violence against children, including corporal punishment.

IV. Family environment and alternative care (arts. 5, 9–11, 18 (1) and (2), 20, 21, 25 and 27 (4))

Family environment

35. Additional safeguards have been introduced to ensure that mothers and fathers retain their jobs during childcare leave until the child reaches the age of 3 and that their employment contracts are extended until the child reaches at least the age of 5.

36. Both parents raising a child with disabilities under the age of 18 are equally entitled to take paid leave during the summer or at any other time that suits them.

37. The right to take paid leave before completing six months’ service with an employer applies to fathers with two or more children under the age of 14 or a child with disabilities under the age of 18.

38. Since 2020, a separate type of leave has been introduced for fathers lasting up to 14 days during the first 6 months after the birth of a child.

39. Additional time off work is provided for parents bringing up two or more children under the age of 16 or a child with disabilities under the age of 18.

40. The period spent caring for a child under the age of 3 counts towards the total length of service used to calculate a pension. From 1 January 2025, fathers who have brought up children with disabilities on their own are entitled to an early old-age pension. To ensure that families with children have access to social services, there are 146 local social services centres and 2 social services centres for families and children, providing over 100 types of social services. Programmes and projects are being implemented to assist various categories of families in maintaining a positive psychological climate within the family, ensuring the equal involvement of both parents in childcare, teaching positive family communication skills and promoting the social inclusion of children with disabilities. Activities are conducted through a variety of formats, including parenting programmes for mothers and fathers, family clubs, mutual support groups, online discussion forums and other initiatives.

41. The professional development programmes for specialists include training on working with families raising children in difficult life situations, including domestic violence situations; modern approaches to providing psychological support; and the use of alternative and augmentative communication, plain language and sign language interpretation.

Children deprived of a family environment

42. Children may be separated from their parents only in cases where the parents fail to properly fulfil their obligations to raise and support them. Parents may be deprived of their rights only through the courts.

43. Social safeguards for children deprived of a family environment are being developed. Act No. 86-Z of 12 July 2025 on amendments to laws on ensuring children's rights establishes legal guarantees for the provision of medicines and medical devices, including eyeglasses, to orphans and children deprived of parental care and young persons who were orphaned or deprived of parental care as children, funded from the national and local budgets.

44. Between 2020 and 2023, the Plan for Interdepartmental Measures for the Comprehensive Deinstitutionalization of Children and Young People was implemented. Measures to deinstitutionalize children in residential care, including orphans, children deprived of parental care, children with special developmental needs and children with disabilities, post-institutional support and the provision of comprehensive assistance to families raising children who find themselves in difficult life circumstances are included in: the National Plan of Action to Improve the Situation of Children and Protect their Rights for the period 2022–2026, approved by Council of Ministers Decision No. 490 of 25 July 2022; the State Programme on Education and Youth Policy for the period 2021–2025, approved by Council of Ministers Decision No. 57 of 29 January 2021; the State Programme on Public Health and Demographic Security in Belarus for the period 2021–2025, approved by Council of Ministers Decision No. 28 of 19 January 2021; and the Joint Action Plan for the Prevention of Disability and the Protection of the Rights of Children and Young People with Disabilities and Their Parents, approved on 10 January 2019.

45. State programmes for the period 2026–2030 are being drawn up, incorporating additional measures to place orphans in families.

46. More than 80% of the orphans identified each year are placed with foster families. There has been a positive trend towards placing children from residential care institutions with families.

47. There has been a sustained decline in the number of children in residential institutions in the education, healthcare and social protection sectors.

48. The decision to place a child with disabilities in a residential institution for children is made by the local executive and administrative authority following a commission assessment of the child's living conditions. Between 2020 and 2025, the number of children with disabilities living in residential care institutions decreased by 27% (from 593 to 433), owing to the development of support measures to enable children to be brought up within their families.

Adoption

49. The legal framework governing the adoption of children in Belarus is designed to protect the rights and legal interests of children.

50. The rules on adoption are set out in chapter 13 of the Marriage and Family Code. The written consent of a parent who has not been deprived of parental rights is required for the adoption of a child.

51. Articles 127 to 130 of the Marriage and Family Code set out the rules for obtaining informed consent to adoption from parents, tutors or guardians, which serves as an additional safeguard to ensure that their interests are respected in the adoption process.

52. If the child to be adopted is under tutelage (or guardianship), consent must also be obtained from the tutor (or guardian); if the child is in a State children's institution, the consent of the institution's administration is required.

53. The consent of parents, tutors or guardians to the adoption of a child is given in a duly certified or sworn declaration but may also be expressed directly before the adoption court.

54. In the case of children whose parents have not been deprived of parental rights but are unable to care for them, adoption is not possible. The database of children available for adoption does not include information on children under the tutelage (guardianship) of relatives.

55. Adoption cases involving minors are examined according to the judicial process set out in article 393 of the Code of Civil Procedure.

56. The court is entitled to order adoption without the consent of tutors or guardians if it is in the child's interests.

57. Legislation prescribes the frequency and procedures for monitoring the upbringing of children in tutelage (guardianship) families (twice a year) and adoptive families (once a year for three years after adoption).

Abuse and neglect

58. The law provides for action to be taken in response to cases of child neglect and measures for the State to protect the rights and interests of children living in adverse circumstances.

V. Basic health and welfare (arts. 6, 18 (3), 23, 24, 26, 27 (1)–(3) and 33)

Health and health services

59. The Belarusian healthcare system has achieved strong public health outcomes. These are reflected not only in the domestic performance indicators but also in international recognition, confirming that the strategic direction chosen for the sector has been effective.

60. Owing to the efforts being made, Belarus ranks among the top countries with the lowest infant mortality rates. Thanks to the high standard of healthcare in Belarus, the infant mortality rate has fallen to 2.8 per 1,000 live births.

61. Furthermore, Belarus is ranked among the world's best countries in which to have a child, placing 40th out of 180 countries in the 2024 Best Countries in the World for a Child to Be Born In ranking.

62. Belarus ranks 25th among the countries rated most favourable for mothers. All births are attended by qualified physicians.

63. In Belarus, the maternal mortality rate has fallen by more than tenfold over the last two decades. Belarus is one of only a few States members of the World Health Organization (WHO) across the entire European region where there is just 1 maternal death per 100,000 live births.

64. In addition, the high standard of antenatal care enables women living with HIV to have children without HIV, helping the country maintain, since 2016, its status as having achieved the elimination of mother-to-child transmission.

Children with disabilities

65. There are currently 59 early intervention centres operating to identify children with developmental disabilities, or who are at risk of developing them, and to provide

multidisciplinary support to them and their families. This support is designed to improve the effectiveness and quality of rehabilitation and habilitation. Children with disabilities are ensured the right to basic, supplementary and special education, taking into account their health status, medical considerations and cognitive abilities. Appropriate accommodations are made to enable them to participate in education and they are provided with the specialized educational support they require.

66. The universal web portal for statistical data on children has been in operation since 2019. The portal system contains approximately 200 indicators related to children, 14 of which are related to disabilities, making it possible to monitor the situation of children with disabilities in key areas of society.

67. The National Interdepartmental Council on Disability is responsible for coordinating the activities of State bodies in the development of a unified policy on persons with disabilities and their social integration.

68. The social support system for families with children with disabilities in Belarus is designed to set in place the right conditions for children to be brought up in a family environment and under family care.

69. The State provides financial support to families by investing in the pension system and State benefits.

Adolescent health

70. Belarus has established an effective newborn screening system that provides screening for seven conditions: phenylketonuria, congenital hypothyroidism, cystic fibrosis, galactosaemia, congenital adrenal hyperplasia, amino acid metabolism disorders and fatty acid oxidation disorders and follow-up monitoring and treatment for patients identified through screening.

71. Preparatory work is under way to expand the range of conditions covered by neonatal screening to 12, and equipment, reagents and consumables are being procured.

72. Healthcare organizations are implementing a family-centred approach to the care of newborns. Arrangements have been made to ensure that mothers and babies can be admitted together, and to involve mothers as much as possible in the care process and in learning how to look after their babies.

73. The survival rate for children with extremely low birth weight during their first year of life in the country is over 80%. In recent years, no more than 17 to 18% of survivors of this group have subsequently been recognized as having a disability. In 2024, the survival rate for babies weighing up to 1,000 g was 85.6%.

74. There are 58 youth-friendly centres in operation, which implement measures to improve the reproductive, mental and physical health and the psychological well-being of adolescents and young people through awareness-raising, the promotion of healthy behaviours and the creation of conditions conducive to their social inclusion. The centres also provide counselling on healthy habits, safe and responsible behaviour and reproductive health; one-to-one counselling on physical development and sexual health, gender equality in family relationships, the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted infections and the prevention of substance use.

75. A bill has been prepared that would establish administrative liability for involving minors in antisocial behaviour by purchasing tobacco products, non-tobacco nicotine products, electronic smoking devices, e-liquids or heated tobacco products for them or inducing a person known to be under 18 years of age to use such products. Administrative penalties for selling non-tobacco nicotine products to minors are being tightened.

Mental health

76. In recent years, the country has seen a decline in the incidence of mental disorders among children (963.3 per 100,000 children in 2020; 904.8 per 100,000 in 2021; 907.5 per 100,000 in 2022; 907.8/100 per 100,000 in 2023; and 913.9 per 100,000 in 2024). In 2024, the number of child patients seeking psychiatric help for the first time decreased by 8.0 per cent, from 18,011 to 16,584.

77. The prevalence of mental disorders among the child population also shows a downward trend (3,428.9 per 100,000 children in 2020; 3,194.5 in 2021; 3,172.3 in 2022; 3,291.2 in 2023; and 3,336.9 in 2024).

78. A set of measures is being implemented to improve the timely identification of risk factors for suicidal behaviour among minors and to provide them with appropriate psychological and/or psychiatric care, along with an action plan for State bodies and other organizations regarding the identification of individuals at risk of suicide. Children who have attempted suicide are provided with specialist medical care (child psychiatrists, addiction psychiatrists, psychotherapists and psychologists), which has helped to prevent further suicides.

Standard of living

79. Belarus is pursuing a consistent policy of raising the income level of the population and providing social guarantees for the most vulnerable members of society. The following strategic documents have been adopted at the national level: the Socioeconomic Development Programme of Belarus for the period 2021–2025; State programmes on social protection and the labour market and employment promotion for the period 2021–2025; and the Government Programme for the period 2025–2029.

80. Comprehensive work is under way to draw up short- and medium-term policy documents for the period 2026–2030, whose implementation will help to reduce poverty levels in Belarus.

VI. Education, leisure and cultural activities (arts. 28–31)

Education, including vocational training and guidance

81. One of the principles of government policy in the field of education is to ensure equal access to education. The right to education of Belarusian citizens is ensured by a number of factors, including the creation of the right framework for education based on national traditions, individual needs and student abilities.

82. The procedure for registering children eligible for general secondary education is set out in Ministry of Education Decision No. 385 of 24 August 2022. For the purpose of identifying children who are not attending school and taking measures to ensure their education, local executive and administrative authorities maintain records of all children from birth to 18 years of age, including foreign nationals and stateless persons.

83. If children are identified who have not started attending school, the education departments (divisions) of local executive and administrative authorities take measures to place in general secondary education institutions children who are not receiving education or who have discontinued their education in such institutions. They may also request that the competent authorities impose penalties on the parents or other legal representatives who fail to ensure that the child receives a compulsory general secondary education.

84. Belarusian citizens who identify as members of an ethnic minority are able to study the language and culture of that minority and the culture and traditions of their people.

85. The standard curriculum for general secondary education provides for the opportunity to study the language and literature of an ethnic minority in class.

86. One of the achievements of the preschool education system in Belarus is its accessibility. For several years now, the percentage of children aged 1 to 6 receiving preschool education has remained at around 90% (88.5% in 2024; 88.9% in 2023), including in rural areas. This is one of the highest figures among countries worldwide.

87. The Programme for the Development and Improvement of Preschool Education for the period 2024–2025 and the Policy Framework for the Development of the Preschool Education System in the Republic of Belarus in the period up to 2035 have been drawn up and are being implemented.

Access to education in correctional institutions

88. Under the Education Code, persons held in correctional institutions within the penal system and in medical labour rehabilitation centres of the Ministry of Internal Affairs are provided with opportunities to receive general secondary, vocational and specialized secondary education as well as adult continuing education under vocational training programmes. These opportunities are provided through the establishment by local executive and administrative authorities of State secondary schools (and their branches) and branches of State colleges within correctional institutions, correctional production enterprises subordinate to the Department of Corrections and medical labour rehabilitation centres of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

89. In addition, the Code provides for the possibility of organizing educational programmes in remand centres and correctional institutions. A joint decision of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the State Security Committee (KGB) of the Republic of Belarus (No. 158/156/8 of 24 June 2022) approved instructions on the education of students held in pretrial detention centres or correctional institutions.

90. The Rules for the Assessment of Students Completing General Secondary Education Programmes, approved by Ministry of Education Decision No. 184 of 11 July 2022, allow persons held in pretrial detention centres, correctional institutions, correctional production enterprises or medical labour rehabilitation centres to take graduation and centralized examinations, provided that they are enrolled in general secondary education institutions (or their branches) operating on the premises of those facilities. For example, in the 2024/25 school year, 11 students took the final exams in grade 9 and 50 students took them in grade 11.

Twenty-first century skills Elimination of gender stereotypes

91. In the grade 11 social studies course, students learn about the objectives and principal areas of the Belarusian government gender policy and explore possible ways to address gender issues. Gender policy is defined as the Government's targeted efforts to ensure equality between men and women and maintain gender balance in all areas of social life.

92. General secondary schools offer optional courses aimed at overcoming gender stereotypes, including Preparation for Family Life for grades 10 and 11 and Health and Hygiene for grade 9. The content of the curriculum is designed to explore the moral foundations of family life, help students develop a positive attitude towards the institutions of marriage and the family and foster a positive image of the family.

93. In the Labour Training course, students in grades 5 to 9 acquire theoretical knowledge and develop practical skills in work activities involving the processing of materials and food preparation, technical and creative work, arts and crafts, home economics and gardening.

94. Beginning with the 2020/21 school year, new units were introduced: Fundamentals of Home Economics was added to the Labour Training (Technical) curriculum and Household Repairs to Labour Training (Home Economics) curriculum.

95. Where conditions at the educational institution permit and the workshops and home economics classrooms are adequately equipped, it is recommended that boys and girls be taught together in the same classroom when studying the units Fundamentals of Home Economics and Household Repairs.

Inclusive education

96. The principle of inclusive education is established in the Education Code and provides for equal access to education for all students, taking into account the diversity of their individual educational needs and abilities.

97. Most children with special educational needs are educated in inclusive settings.

98. One of the achievements of the education system is the comprehensive support system that has been established for children with special developmental needs, from birth until they complete vocational education.

99. As part of the road map for the implementation of the priority areas of the Policy Framework for Improving the Preparation of Persons with Special Developmental Needs for Employment and Family Life and for Their Socialization and Integration into Society for the period 2025–2027, and the Joint Action Plan for 2025–2027 to Ensure the Rights of Children and Young Persons with Disabilities and Their Parents, efforts are under way to improve vocational training for persons with special developmental needs.

100. Support is provided to persons with special developmental needs for two years after they complete their education.

VII. Special protection measures (arts. 22, 30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37 (b)–(d) and 38–40)

Children in situations of migration

101. The legal status of children who have been granted refugee status, subsidiary protection, asylum or temporary protection, or who have applied for such status (hereinafter, unless otherwise specified, referred to as “children in situations of forced displacement”), is governed by Act No. 354-Z of 23 June 2008 on the Granting of Refugee Status and Subsidiary or Temporary Protection to Foreign Nationals and Stateless Persons in the Republic of Belarus. The Act contains no provisions requiring decision-makers to take account of the principle of the best interests of the child when making decisions concerning such children. Certain provisions of the Refugees Act contain provisions aimed at safeguarding the rights and legitimate interests of children in situations of forced displacement.

102. Children granted refugee status or asylum in Belarus have the same legal status as foreign nationals permanently residing in the country and enjoy certain rights on an equal footing with Belarusian citizens.

Sexual exploitation and abuse

103. In Belarus, sexual relations between adults and children are neither tolerated nor accepted. Their unacceptability is firmly established at all levels, from legislation to public opinion, and engaging in such conduct constitutes a criminal offence, including where the acts are ostensibly consensual if the victim is below the age of consent.

104. Comprehensive measures to prevent, identify and respond to sexual violence against children have been established in law and are being implemented. The Criminal Code contains a substantial number of provisions establishing liability for physical violence that causes harm to the life or health of a child.

105. Plans are being implemented for organizational, analytical, practical and other measures to protect children from sexual violence and exploitation, together with the national

mechanism for providing assistance to child victims of sexual violence and exploitation. These measures set out the procedures for preventing violence against children and for the relevant State authorities to provide support to children who have been subjected to sexual violence. The use of child-friendly interview rooms, including those based in social and education support centres, for interviewing child victims and taking their evidence is regulated by the Criminal Procedure Code and a government decision.

106. Thanks to the systematic implementation of crime prevention measures, there has been a steady downward trend in crime rates and the number of victims in this area. Methods for detecting these crimes committed in digital spaces are constantly being improved. Appropriate training programmes for staff are being organized, including those involving international experts and those held abroad. A systematic effort is being made to improve the training of educational psychologists and other professionals who provide support to children who have been victims of sexual violence and exploitation.

107. The measures being implemented provide effective protection for all children equally.

108. The kids.pomogut.by website is now live; it serves as a source of important and essential information on prevention and other topics for children, parents and professionals working in the field of prevention.

109. Awareness-raising facilities and centres aimed at preventing sexual offences against children continue to operate throughout the country.

Administration of juvenile justice

110. In Belarus, the juvenile justice system is administered by the general courts. Specialized courts may be set up within the system of general courts.

111. There is no need at present to establish specialized juvenile courts within the general court system, principally because few cases fall into this category.

112. It is not practical to establish specialized juvenile courts in every region. The establishment of a single court for the entire country would undermine the principles of territorial jurisdiction and access to justice and would result in unnecessary procedural costs.

113. Currently, juvenile justice in Belarus is administered under the law through the process of specialization of judges. Cases affecting the rights and legal interests of minors are heard by highly qualified judges with considerable professional experience.

114. Proceedings in cases involving offences committed by minors are conducted in strict accordance with criminal and criminal procedure legislation, thereby ensuring the fullest possible protection of the rights and legitimate interests of children, fair sentencing and the prevention of reoffending.

115. The Code of Criminal Procedure provides that the rights of a minor suspected or accused of a criminal offence may be exercised by his or her legal representatives alongside the minor or in the minor's stead (arts. 41 (3) and 43 (3)). In such cases, the participation of a defence lawyer in the preliminary inquiry and in the criminal case is mandatory if the suspect or accused is a minor (art. 45 (1) (2)), and a refusal to be represented by a defence lawyer is not permitted (art. 47 (3)).

116. In recent years, there has been a downward trend in the number of convicted minors. For example, over the past five years, the number of convicted minors has decreased by 2%. Judicial practice indicates that probation is used for minors charged with criminal offences. In 2024, criminal justice measures such as deferred sentences, suspended sentences, convictions without a sentence, release from serving a sentence and compulsory educational measures were imposed on 39% of convicted minors.

117. Criminal procedure law provides that a minor may not be detained as a pretrial measure if suspected or charged with committing a less serious offence that does not involve an attack on human life or health (with the exception of persons who have committed extremist offences). Provisions have been made regarding the specific procedures for carrying out legal proceedings involving minors, and the participation of a teacher or

psychologist and legal representatives. The questioning of a juvenile victim or witness who has not reached 16 years of age in criminal cases concerning crimes against personal liberty, honour and dignity, life and health, sexual inviolability or sexual freedom must, if possible, be conducted in a child-friendly interview room, whose operating procedures are laid down by the Government.

118. In correctional institutions, provision is made for the separate accommodation of male and female prisoners and juvenile and adult prisoners. Convicted persons and detainees are provided with the necessary accommodation and living conditions. Improved living conditions, higher nutritional standards and opportunities to receive basic and secondary education are provided for minors.

119. There is a mother-and-child unit on the grounds of the correctional colony, where round-the-clock care is provided for the children of incarcerated women.

120. Convicted female prisoners visit their children who are staying at the unit and, when they are free from work, can spend as much time with their children as they wish. Since 2019, the mother-and-child unit of the correctional institution has included a residential facility where mothers may live with their children. To help maintain family ties, monthly video calls are arranged between incarcerated mothers' relatives and their children. In addition, family days are organized, providing relatives with an opportunity to spend time with the children.

Public oversight of the activities of bodies and institutions responsible for the enforcement of sentences

121. Public oversight of the bodies and institutions that enforce prison sentences and other penalties is carried out on a continuous basis to identify any violations of the rights of convicted persons and issues related to the serving of their sentences.

122. Such oversight is exercised by public monitoring commissions.

123. Public monitoring commissions at the national and local levels, with a view to exercising public oversight of the activities of the bodies and institutions responsible for the enforcement of sentences and other criminal penalties, carry out visits on a regular basis (at least once a year) to correctional institutions where convicted minors are held.

124. The National Public Monitoring Commission under the Ministry of Justice has been in place since 2007 and local commissions have been established under the central departments of justice of the oblast and Minsk executive committees.

Child labour

125. In accordance with the general provisions of the Labour Code, employment contracts may be concluded with persons who have reached the age of 16. The minimum age for employees has been set at 14. For a person of this age (between 14 and 16 years old), an employment contract may be entered into only with the written consent of one of their parents, adoptive parents or guardians. Another condition for entering into an employment contract with an employee in this age group is that the work must be light or involve professional sports; such work or activities must not be harmful to the employee's health and development, nor must they interfere with the employee's ability to obtain a general secondary education, a vocational education or a specialized secondary education.

126. Employment contracts entered into with persons under the age of 14, or with persons aged between 14 and 16 without the written consent of a parent, adoptive parent or guardian, are considered invalid.

127. The list of light types of work that may be performed by persons between the ages of 14 and 16 is set out in Ministry of Labour and Social Protection Decision No. 144 of 15 October 2010.

128. It is prohibited to employ persons under the age of 18 in heavy labour, in jobs involving hazardous or harmful working conditions or in underground and mining work.

VIII. Follow up to the Committee's previous concluding observations and recommendations concerning the implementation of the Optional Protocols to the Convention (CRC/C/BLR/CO/5-6)

Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict

129. The involvement of Belarusian children in armed conflict is categorically ruled out. Belarus is not a party to any armed conflict and does not conduct military operations on the territory of other countries. Children do not have unrestricted access to weapons.

130. Military and patriotic training in educational institutions, including cadet schools and the Suvorov Military School, is aimed at fostering the qualities of a citizen and a patriot, instilling healthy living habits, fostering a sense of unity within the school community and preparing students for entry into relevant higher education institutions.

131. The procedure for examining applications from foreign nationals for refugee status, subsidiary protection or asylum in Belarus is governed by the Refugees Act. Under the Act, a foreign national is required to personally submit an application for protection to the citizenship and migration office, where he or she will be interviewed in person.

132. Under the legislation governing forced migration, an interview with an unaccompanied foreign child seeking international protection is conducted in the presence of the child's tutor or guardian or authorized representative of an agency of tutorship or guardianship; where necessary, a psychologist, a representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees or other persons whose attendance is necessary to safeguard the best interests of the unaccompanied child may also be present.

133. If it comes to light during the consideration of an application for protection that persons have unlawfully organized, directed or assisted the illegal entry into, stay in or exit from Belarus of the foreign national applying for protection, the citizenship and migration office is to inform the internal affairs bodies in writing.

134. During the preliminary stage, all foreign nationals, including minors, have access to legal aid, which gives them an opportunity to report having been used in armed conflict and to receive psychological and medical support.

135. As of 29 October 2025, no cases of recruitment or use in hostilities have been identified among foreign children seeking protection.

IX. Additional information from the State Party (annex)

136. Statistical data on the situation of children are provided in the annex.
